

**MONTGOMERY BELL  
CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA**

**COUNTY:** Dickson

**ACREAGE:** 600

**7.5' QUADRANGLE:** Burns

**OWNERSHIP:** State of Tennessee

**PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** Western Highland Rim

**DESIGNATED:** 1998

**DESCRIPTION:** Montgomery Bell Natural Area is located in Dickson County and is comprised of two tracts of high quality oak-hickory forest nested within the 5,000-acre Montgomery Bell State Park. These two tracts were recognized as significant by two prominent ecologists, Dr. Elsie Quarterman and Catherine Keever as a part of the National Natural Landmark inventories in the early 1970's. In the inventory report, they stated that these tracts "provide the best known example of representative oak-hickory forest ecosystems on the Western Highland Rim in Tennessee. The presence of southern red oak and post oak in the dominant layer, provide floristic and ecologic affinities that are missing in the upland forest recognized elsewhere in the province."

Ridges and shallow valleys with local relief of around 130 feet dominate the 350-acre southern tract. A southern red oak-post oak-hickory forest and a white oak-southern red oak-hickory-tulip poplar forest have been identified here. A small remnant oak barrens community dominated by little bluestem also occurs on the southern tract. The 250-acre northern tract is located in an area referred to as Wildcat Ridge. While this area supports representative oak-hickory forest it also includes a more mesic forest that features examples of very large trees. These include white oak as the dominant species with tulip poplar, white ash, black cherry, sugar maple, beech and black gum as community associates. Both tracts are accessible by well-maintained park trails

These natural areas occur in a region where logging is an important industry, past and present. The last logging records in the state park dates back to the 1933 before the land came under public ownership. This area is noted for its vast iron industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with its many iron furnaces that were once fueled by the surrounding forests.

**SITE MANAGEMENT:** Montgomery Bell State Park, 1020 Jackson Hill Road, Burns, TN 37029 (615)-797-9051; Division of Natural Areas, 401 Church Street, 7th Floor L&C Annex, Nashville, TN 37243-0447 (615)-532-0431

**PUBLIC ACCESS:** Public access is allowed; parking and hiking trails are provided.

**DIRECTIONS:** Montgomery Bell State Park is located 7 miles east of Dickson in Dickson County on Highway 70.